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FM AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0630
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 6443
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 5162
RUEHRG/AMCONSUL RECIFE 7476
RUEHRI/AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO 5550
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 1302
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BRASILIA 002262

SIPDIS

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FOR WHA, WHA/BSC, AND S/CT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2027

TAGS: PTER PGOV PREL BR AR

SUBJECT: BRAZIL: UNWILLING TO ENDORSE ARGENTINE CLAIMS ON AMIA

REF: A. (A) BUENOS AIRES 002222

1B. (B) BRASILIA 002070

1C. (C) BUENOS AIRES 000520

Classified By: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION PHIL CHICOLA FOR REASONS 1.4 B A
ND D

11. (S) Summary: With its abstention on the vote to confirm issuance of international capture notices for five Iranian nationals and one Lebanese suspected of involvement in the 1994 terrorist attack in Buenos Aires at the Interpol General Assembly session on November 7 the Government of Brazil has now twice refused to take a formal and public position on the Argentine case, likely due to extreme sensitivities over Argentine allegations that some support for the attack may have been provided by individuals in the Triborder Area of Argentina, Paraguay, and Brazil (TBA). A vote to issue the red notices would undermine their long-standing claim that there is no evidence of an operational terrorist presence in Brazil. End Summary.

Argentine Officials Miffed

12. (S) In the aftermath of the Interpol General Assembly vote to confirm the Interpol Executive Committee's decision to issue the international capture notices, Gustavo Beguet, Political Counselor for External Affairs and Guillermo Devoto, Political Counselor for Internal Affairs at the Argentine Embassy called on Poloffs to exchange thoughts on Brazil's actions prior to and during the Interpol vote. Both indicated that Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Relations (Itamaraty) contacted the Argentine Embassy in Brasilia just prior to the Interpol General Assembly vote, "out of courtesy," to inform the Government of Argentina that the Brazilian delegation would abstain during the vote. According to Beguet, Itamaraty explained that since the Argentine case includes evidence of links between the perpetrators of the attack and the TBA--a claim Brazil does not acknowledge--it could not vote in favor of issuing the notices.

Iranian Lobbying Key to Brazil's Abstention?

13. (S) During the meeting, Beguet offered speculation that Iranian lobbying--he mentioned the visit of Muhammad Nahavandian of Iran's Supreme Council for National Security to Brazil in early September--also may have played a part in

Brazil's abstention.

¶4. (S) Argentine suspicions of an Iranian role go back to Interpol's Executive Committee (EC) meeting on March 15th, when the EC approved issuance of capture notices. The Brazilian representative was the only EC member not to attend the March 15 session. At the time, a source at the Argentine Ministry of Foreign Affairs speculated Brazil may have wanted to avoid complicating its relations with Iran (Ref C).

(Note: Post intends to follow up with various contacts on Argentine speculation on a possible Iranian role behind Brazil's actions. End Note.)

Comment:

¶5. (S) With two missed opportunities to back up often repeated claims of solidarity with Argentina over the two terrorist attacks it suffered in 1992 (Israeli Embassy Bombing) and 1994 (AMIA Jewish Center Bombing), and a recent string of hard questioning about the usefulness of the 3 1 mechanism, post believes Itamaraty is taking its sensitivities with regards to the TBA to new heights. With its initial reluctance to support reversion of the 3 1 agenda back to its original focus on transnational criminal issues (something which Brazil had in the past supported) Itamaraty seems determined not to give up an inch of ground publicly to the US on a counterterrorism issue that affects Brazil. While working level cooperation with Brazil's law enforcement agencies has not changed and remains productive, Itamaraty's obstruction is starting to be felt in more than symbolic ways.

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